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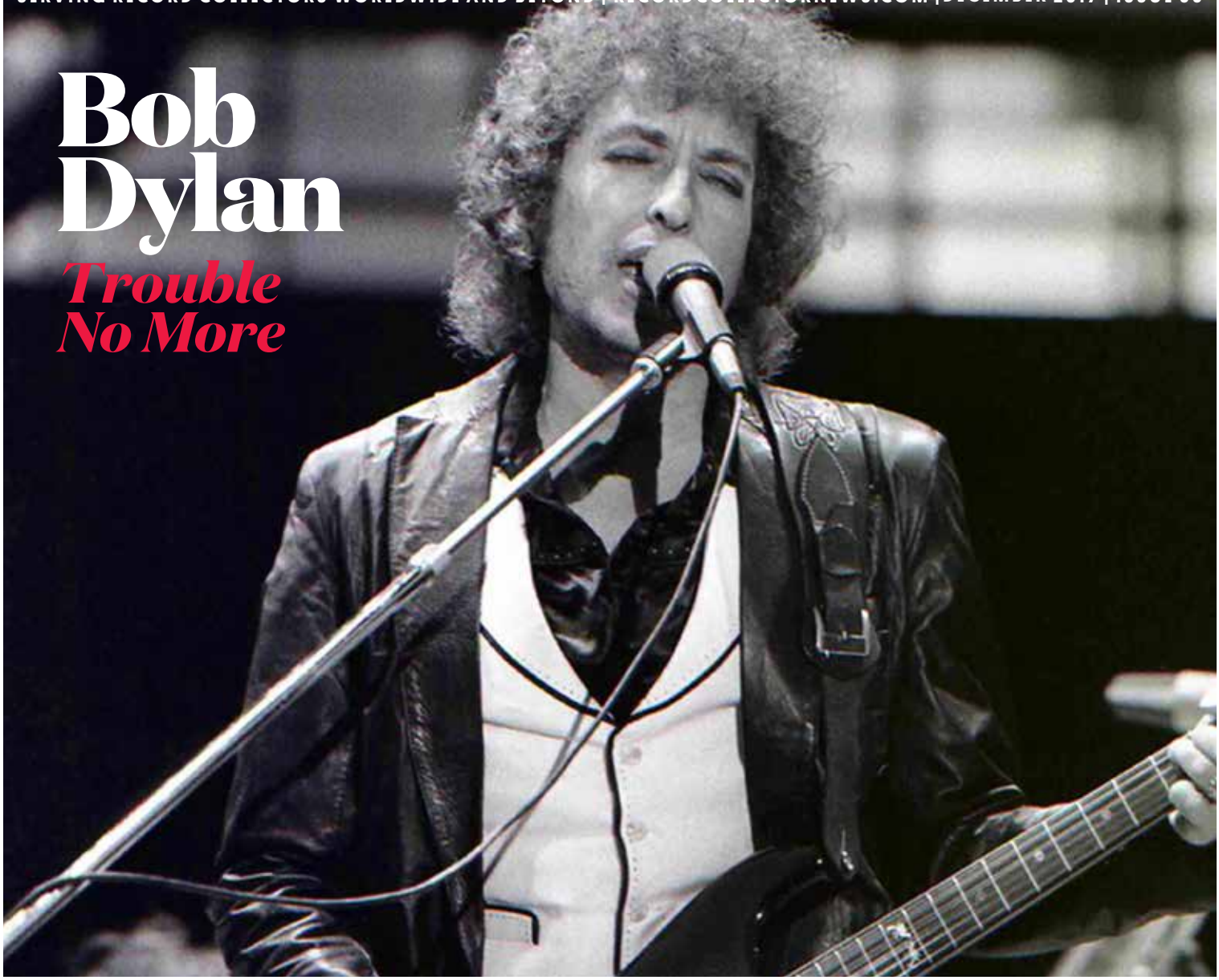

Bob Dylan

Trouble No More

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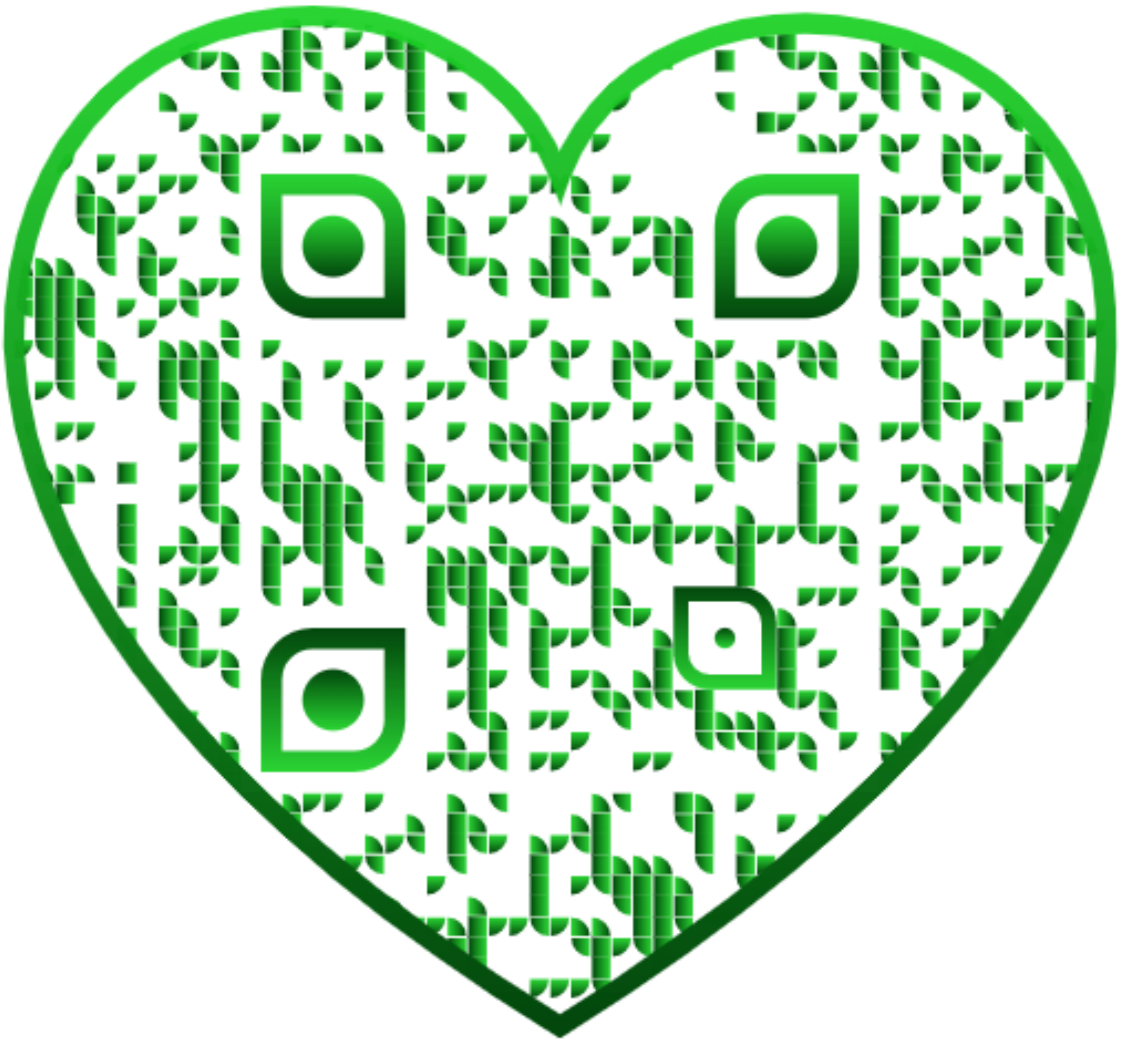

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ON THE COVER
Bob Dylan, 1978
Wikimedia Commons photo

"Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord But you're gonna have to serve somebody"
–"Your Gonna Have to Serve Sombody'," Bob Dylan

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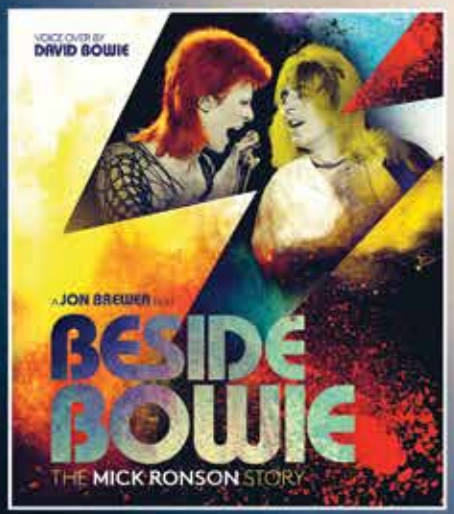

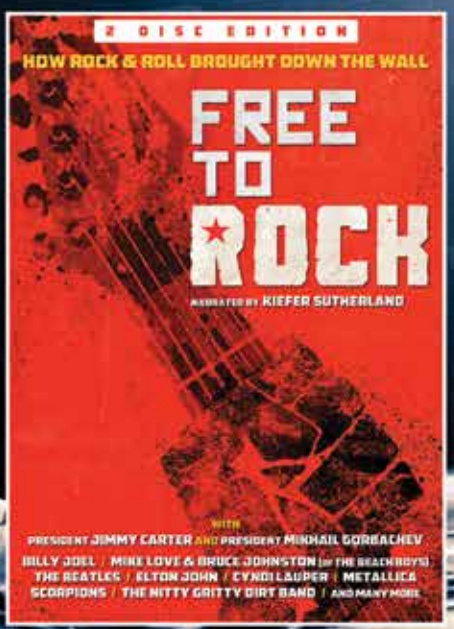
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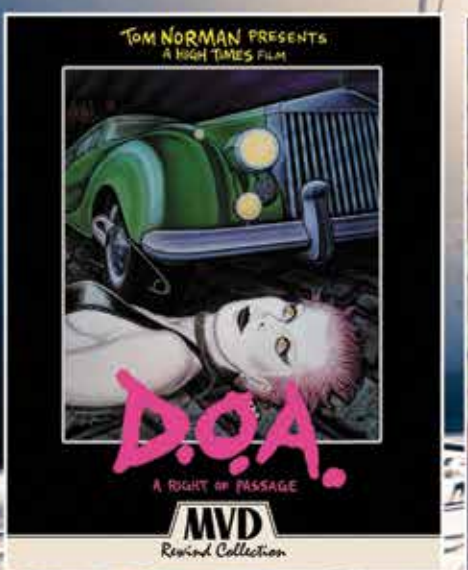

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KAPLAN'S KORNER

Best of 2017

BEST SOUNDTRACK LP THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE

I WAS A FAN OF *MAN IN THE HIGH* Castle author Philip K Dick from an early, impressionable age, I am a fan of the Amazon series as well which takes place in 1963. The soundtrack is the alternative versions of American Pop hits of that day. Only ummm, not quite the same versions.

I find that particular dystopian history, where the Japanese and Nazis won WWll and have split the USA in half, much more interesting, scary and creepy than zombies or vampires. Remember vampires? Are they still a thing? Anyway, inspired by the Amazon series, a number of artists have contributed including, Beck doing "Can't Help Falling in Love, Sam Cohen's versions of "Get Happy" and "The House of the Rising Sun," Norah Jones doing "Unchained Melody" and Sharon Van Etten, who's version of "The End of the World" sets the slowed down, minor chord, tone for the record.

BEST 1960'S BRIT PROG ROCKER LIVING IN GREECE,

PATRICK CAMPBELL-LYONS' LA-test work *You're a Cloud, I'm a Comet*, continues the groove.

Patrick Campbell-Lyons is an artist. Starting with Nirvana UK in 1967 thru todays beautiful new CD, *You're a Cloud, I'm a Comet*. It sounds like Patrick is in tune with his muse. What can I tell you. The music is beautiful and haunting and sometimes not haunting at all. Just beautiful and lilting. Bounding along. I certainly hope there's more to come. Written by Patrick Campbell-Lyons and produced by Costas Sterglou in Athens, Greece on Market Square Music. Available in CD and LP!

BEST RECORD STORE

WHICHEVER ONE I'M IN RIGHT now. I admit I feel blessed that I live close enough to go to Amoeba Hollywood more than once a week. I usually go on Sundays as it is a church like experience for me. Lots of denominations there...

BEST OBITUARY OF 2017

DID YOU READ THE OBITUARY Patti Smith wrote about Sam Shepherd? To call Patti Smith the Queen of Punk Rock is way too limiting. Read *Just Kids*. Read *M Train*. You're reading literature. Go back and listen to her music some more. It's more art than craft.

THE MOVING COIL CARTRIDGE FOR THE REST OF US

NEXT TIME YOU NEED A MOVING Coil cartridge listen to the HANA EL or EH. Retailing for only $475 they sound awesome from top to bottom and from left to right. And from front to back. And between my ears. I think it's the ALNIC magnet that makes it sound so compelling. This thing gets great reviews everywhere and is super easy to recommend. The EH works well with Moving Magnet inputs and the EL is amazing in your MC input with resistance dialed in.

BEST SOUNDING RECORD AND IT JUST SHOWED UP!!

NOT SURE HOW IT HAPPENED but MOFI's Ultradisc One-Step reissue of Donald Fagan's *The Nighgfly* showed up on my door-step. What a Beautiful World this will be, indeed. One of the top 11 best records? In my modest 2000 plus piece collection, Probably. Gosh dang this record rocks, sounds amazing and really shows off our systems here at *RCN* World HQ. Things have been sounding good here at *RCN* World HQ but this record on MOFI is next level stuff. Stunning.

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FAVORITE STYLUS CLEANING BRUSH

THE GROOVEWASHER SCI STYLUS Cleaning Kit has an angled 4.6-inch-long handled brush with soft bristles that is easy to use and gives a lot more control. Once again, it's all about the angle. The kit includes stylus cleaning fluid too!

BEST MILE HIGH AUDIO SHOW – ROCKY MOUNTAIN AUDIO FEST OF COURSE

MY SECOND TRIP TO THE RMAF at the Denver Marriott Tech Center Hotel from October 6th through the 8th was the best. The venue was perfect, Denver is a great town, and according to my notes, the rooms sounded great. Meaning most of rooms I went into sounded as if the people showing off their equipment really gave enough of a shit to keep working on set-up until it sounded right. That's no easy feat when you're trying to set up a system in a hotel room with all less than optimal conditions for great sound. But these guys made it work. I heard a lot of regionally built equipment that you don't see here on the West Coast.

BEST SOUND AT RMAF OR ANY AUDIO SHOW I'VE EVER BEEN TO FOR THAT MATTER

THAT'S WHAT MY NOTES READ when I was listening to Cecile McLorin *Salvant Dreams and Daggers* on Mack Avenue record in the room shared by two of my personal favorites, VTL Amplifiers and Vandersteen Audio speakers. I've never heard them together and apparently, this was, in fact, their first time at an audio show together.

On top of that, Bea Manley was spinning Cecil McLorin *Salvant's Dreams and Daggars* on Mack Avenue records, another first-time listening experience for me. One that I will spend a lot of time, and resources trying to duplicate. That is for sure.

The look of joy on Bea's face as she listened to that record for the fiftieth time on that magnificent system that weekend was as real as the first. Hold off on purchasing Cecil's record for a week or so until I order a second copy. This record is that good. I want a sealed copy to just look at while I'm listening to it.

On the VTL and Vandersteen system of course. I'm not mentioning specific model numbers because I don't think model numbers or specifically, price point, matters with these guys. This system was in the six-figure range but VTL electronics start at less than $5,000 and Vandersteen Speakers less than $2,000. Both make top of the line audio equipment in all price ranges. Buy what you can afford with two of the best California based audio companies. You will not go wrong. If I had your money I would burn my money and then buy some top of the line VTL and Vandersteen.

I remember the first time I heard steely Dan's *Asia* I reacted with, "Oh, no, this is too beautiful. I need a few dozen listenings to even begin to understand what's going on here. Same thing with *Dreams and Daggaars* in the Vandersteen Speaker/VTL Electronics room. Drinking beauty from a firehose. It was as if I was being let in on a secret.

BEST BIG, MONEY IS NO OBJECT SPEAKERS AT RMAF

GAMUT. TONS OF FUN FOR $140,000. Michael at Audio Skies really sets up a room. My notes for this room are "Oh, come on. So much energy. Most of any room! Live! Live!"

Now I'm no expert on that level of high end awesomeness. As a matter of fact, most really expensive rooms don't do much for me. I expect more or I don't hear right. Whatever. But when I walk into a room and my reaction is a visceral "OH Come ON."

I was feeling something people. Also, they had a reel-to-reel set up and I really thought I was listening to reel-to-reel but it was the Pear Audio Kid Thomas Blue turntable. Of course, it was. Oh, come on.

Happy Holidays Everybody!

Jim Kaplan

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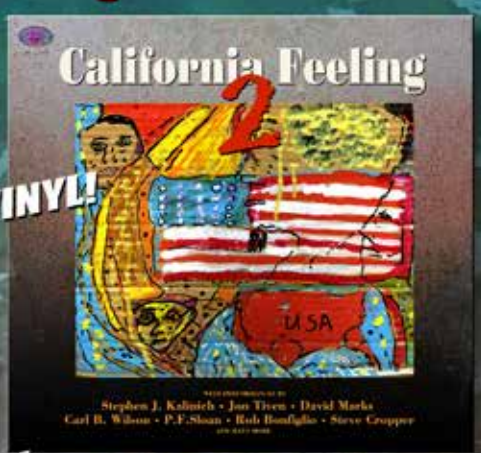

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The Gospel of Bob Dylan

New: *Bob Dylan -Trouble No More -The Bootleg Series Vol. 13/1979-1981* and Dylan's *John Wesley Harding* Celebrates 50 Year Anniversary

BY HARVEY KUBERNIK

COLUMBIA RECORDS AND LEGACY Recordings, the catalog division of Sony Music Entertainment, has just issued *Bob Dylan-Trouble No More-The Bootleg Series Vol. 13/1979-1981* this month.

The deluxe nine-disc (8CD/1DVD) box set is the latest volume in the acclaimed Dylan bootleg series. The anthology premieres 100 previously unreleased live and studio recordings including 14 Unreleased Songs.

The latest chapter in Columbia/Legacy's highly praised *Bob Dylan Bootleg Series* showcases the music Dylan wrote and performed during one of the most surprising, controversial and inspired periods of his career.

As the 1970s ended and the 1980s began, Dylan responded to the changing of the decades with a three-album trilogy — *Slow Train Coming* (1979), *Saved* (1980) and *Shot of Love* (1981) — of spirit-filled songs of praise, worship, devotion, the power of faith and force of personal conviction.

Available exclusively on the deluxe box set is a DVD which includes *Trouble No More: A Musical Film*, a new feature-length cinematic presentation combining unreleased footage from Dylan's 1980 tours with new material written by Luc Sante and performed by Academy Award nominee Michael Shannon and directed by Jennifer Lebeau.

Bonus extras on the box set's exclusive DVD include a rare performance of "Shot of Love" from Avignon 1981 and more.

Bob Dylan-Trouble No More-The Bootleg Series Vol. 13/1979-1981 is also available in 2 CD and 4 LP configurations featuring the first two discs from the deluxe box.

With the exception of "Ye Shall Be Changed," released in 1991 on The Bootleg Series, Vol. 1-3, none of the tracks on *Trouble No More* have been previously released. This collection debuts 14 previously unreleased songs and a multitude of unreleased live performances, rare studio outtakes and more.

The live concerts from this crucial epoch in Dylan's history contain some of the most intensely jubilant and transcendent performances of his career.

I saw one of the November 1979 concerts at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in Southern California.

Drummer Bruce Gary, then with the Knack, and I were invited to the show by our dear friend Jim Keltner who arranged tickets and all access passes.

I entered the venue doubting Dylan's recent religious conversation. I really had no grasp of the back story. And I was also too cynical to let someone be who they wanted to be in the public arena.

The sense of community on display backstage was really powerful. Bob's bassist, Tim Drummond, made me laugh telling stories about touring with James Brown in Vietnam.

Dylan was very nice to chat with. I mentioned I had interviewed Johnny Cash in 1975. We share a February 26th birthday. Bob took off his sunglasses and sternly replied, "Johnny Cash is a friend of mine."

The spiritual aspect of Dylan's current songs in front of a crowd became even more apparent. I reviewed the transformative night for *Melody Maker*.

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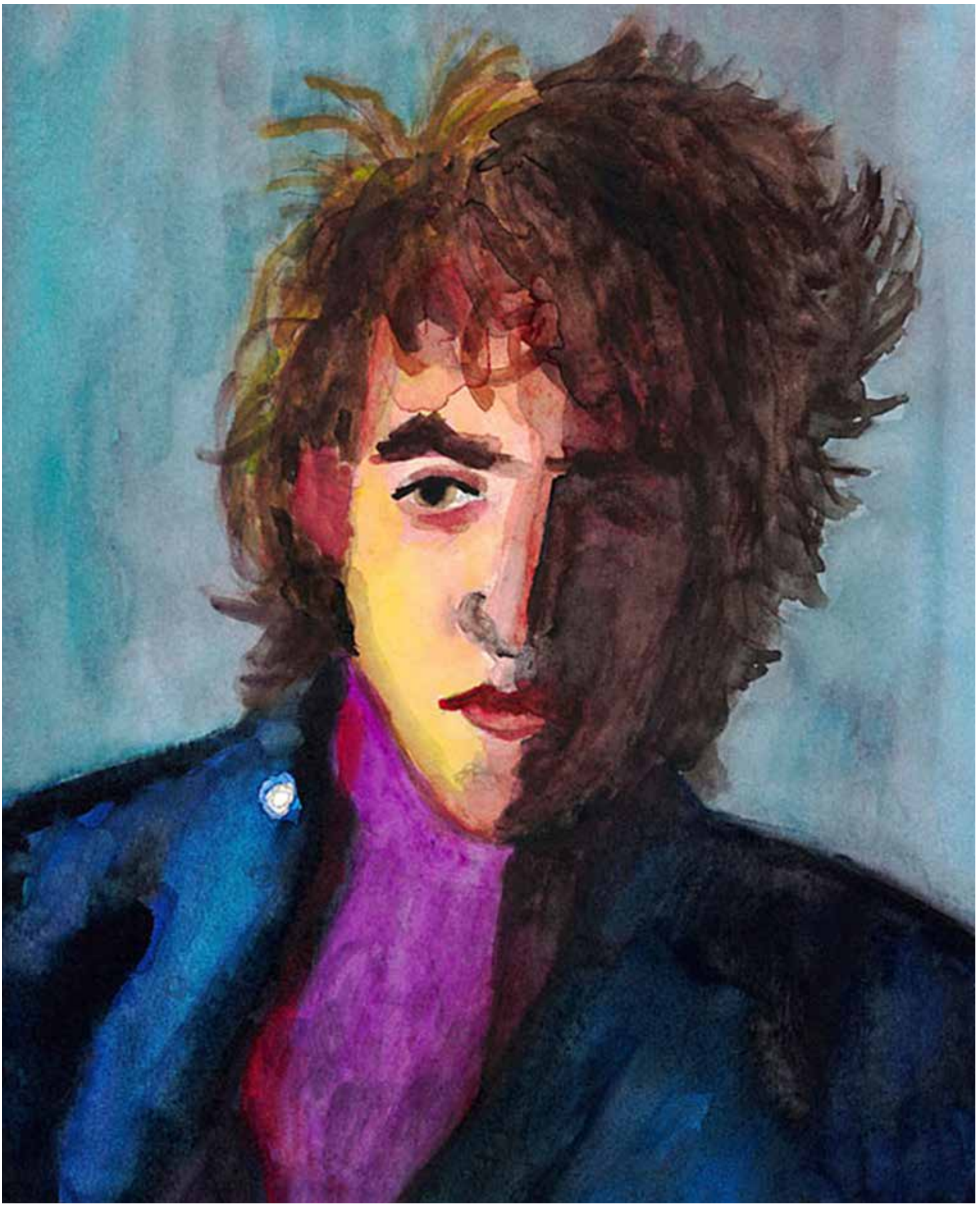

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I seem to remember at this 1979 gig a slew of gospel numbers from his female vocalists opening the performance before the star-turn arrival of seemingly born again Christian songwriter Dylan occasionally spieling on stage about our current world.

On the boards, Dylan was like a preacher or evangelist offering between-song sermons at times about a potential gloom and doom apocalypse which have been edited out of this *Trouble No More* package.

I think a non-truncated edition might have presented a fuller document on the journey Dylan had embarked on.

Dylan's intense live vocals captured on these discs are convincing and his tour band smoked.

When I caught his 1979 live action, Dylan connected with the sometimes baffled but adoring throng. "In the Garden" sounded like a track that could have been on *Abbey Road*.

"The 30 or so months covered by this box set found Dylan inhabiting, temporarily, a familiar, dramatic, gospel-singing character who could speak/sing with real emotional power and conviction, and that's what I return to in this box set, the drama of this character," offered KEBF-FM deejay and Dylan scholar, Dr. James Cushing.

"A lifelong atheist by temperament, I could care less about the 'message,' he underscored. "I simply find Preacher Bob a lot more intense than the Homebody Bob of *Nashville Skyline* or the Unmoored Bob of the Tom Petty/Grateful Dead period.

The 30 or so months covered by this box set found Dylan inhabiting a familiar, dramatic, gospel-singing character who could sing with real emotional power.

"Inhabiting this character almost cost Dylan his career; *Saved* was such a dud that he had no solo hits until 1997, a 17-year drought broken only technically by the success of the Traveling Wilburys.

"If the live takes of the *Saved* songs (the ones on this box set) had been released at the time, who knows what would have happened? The songs catch fire onstage in every case, and Dylan's band has a lot to do with it," concluded Cushing. "Fred Tackett's guitar solos are bluesy, the piano-organ combination is a delight, and as for rhythm, I insist that Jim Keltner is right up there with Levon Helm and George Recile as Dylan's best-ever drummers."

In November, I spoke with drummer Jim Keltner about his 1979-1981 road stint with Dylan.

"I received a phone call from Bob wanting to know if I'd like to hear his new album and maybe go on the road with him. I wasn't really much interested in touring, but I always loved playing with Bob.

"Earlier in the '70s, the recordings I did with him like 'Watching the River Flow' and 'Knockin' on Heaven's Door' for the *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* movie were so good, I just had to go see what he was up to now.

"So I went over to his studio in Santa Monica to listen to the album. I was put in a little room with a chair and some speakers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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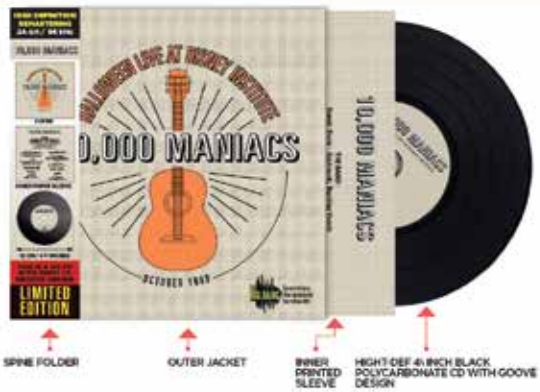

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

There was a box of Kleenex on the table next to me, and by the third song I started to cry and cried practically all the way through the end of the tape.

"When it was finished I went upstairs to a room where Bob was typing. I told him 'wherever you're going and whatever you're going to do I want to go do it with you.'

"I didn't realize at the time, of course, what an effect it would have on my life.

"I loved the rehearsals for the tour. The first one was 9/11/79.

"Every day the most incredible fresh food was delivered for lunch. Occasionally, Bob's longtime boyhood friend, Louie Kemp, [Kemp Fisheries] would send these big card board boxes of fish. Salmon, lox, and smoked fish. One big box contained a huge smoked trout. I, to this day, have never tasted anything so fantastic!

"Bob assembled a stellar cast of musicians and singers. Tim Drummond, one of my very favorite bass players, [guitarist] Fred Tackett, Spooner Oldham on organ, and one of the greatest Gospel piano players I ever heard, Terry Young.

"And the incredible singers: Clydie King, Helena Springs, Regina McCrary, Carolyn Dennis, Mona Lisa Young, Gwen Evans, Mary Elizabeth Bridges, and Madelyn Quebec.

"We ran through all kinds of different songs. His brand-new ones from *Slow Train* and even some old classics like 'All My Tomorrows' by Sammy Cahn and Tommy Edwards' 'It's All in the Game.' We even played a very cool version of 'The Ballad of High Noon' from the movie with Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly. The idea was to get used to playing together without running the show into the ground.

"Playing Bob's music in front of so many people on the road was a very powerful experience. I didn't know it at the time but I eventually realized that we had all been part of one of Bob's most important and creative periods. The last concert was 11/21/81 in Lakeland, Florida.

Bob Dylan in Stockholm, Sweden 1966

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS: SWEDEN PUBLIC DOMAIN

"I'm thankful to have played a part. Not only because of the music and the band and all of the people involved but because my life soon changed from a very destructive path I was on to working hard at keeping my family intact and to be able to continue playing music with the lights on. No longer dim and ready to go out."

For many years I always wanted a box set of Dylan's gospel expedition. Happy it became a retail reality.

DURING DECEMBER OF 2017 WE also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Bob Johnston-produced Bob Dylan *John Wesley Harding* album, released December 27, 1967 on Columbia Records.

By January of 1968 it was one of the most tracked LPs on countless FM radio stations in America and all over the world. It was Dylan's eighth studio album. During 1968 the disc reached #2 on the U.S. record charts and a #1 slot in the U.K. charts.

Dylan presented a collection of songs that placed ethics and homespun values in the forefront. References to the bible are everywhere, and they are placed side by side with a powerful sense of foreboding, which permeates such songs as "All Along the Watchtower," "Drifter's Escape" and "I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine," among others.

While Dylan couldn't have possibly foreseen the events of 1968 — the murders of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. in April and Democratic Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, which were to impact the world more than any other year of the 1960s — the songs on the album provide an eerie glimpse of what was to come, and along with the first two Band albums and Dylan's own *Nashville Skyline*, probably helped more people get through the end of this tumultuous decade more than any other.

John Wesley Harding was written and recorded by Dylan between October 17th and November 29, 1967 during the collective aftermath following the release of *Sgt. Pepper*.

The fact that during this exact period, the pop music landscape was virtually littered with post-*Sgt. Pepper* spin-offs, and that Dylan and his producer Bob Johnston both were thinking along similar, fundamental lines, speaks volumes. Johnston allowed Dylan's simple dark vision to happen without interference. Charlie Bragg engineered the recording sessions.

John Wesley Harding served as the subsequent blueprint for the emerging singer/songwriter genre and country-rock bin section just around the retail corner.

In a 1969 issue of *Crawdaddy!* magazine, critic Jon Landau wrote, "For an album of this kind to be released amidst *Sgt. Pepper*, *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, *After Bathing at Baxter's*, somebody must have had a lot of confidence in what he was doing..."

"The only thing I can compare *John Wesley Harding* to in 20th century pop is Bowie's *Berlin* trilogy," volunteered writer

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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Daniel Weizmann in an email to me in 2017.

"In both cases, a leader of the zeitgeist dared to shake off their own mythological persona and 'humanize.' And in both cases the gesture was so uncynical and urgently felt by the artist that what they created didn't just add a dimension. It made us understand better what they had been saying all along.

"Much has been made, of course, over Dylan going electric two or three years earlier, it's become a kind of trope for 'Entering our modern era' — compared freely to Picasso's cubism and other modernist rebel cultural plays. But to me *John Wesley Harding* was the greater actual rebellion: Here's Dylan choosing to swim not just against the original folk culture that spawned him but against the counter-culture that he spawned, against the very grandiosity that was holding him in place. One thing is for sure — six months after *Sgt. Pepper's*. The flowering of volume in rock music, and the summer of media-saturated love — Dylan took a stand against the electric swarm.

Bob Dylan-Trouble No More-The Bootleg Series Vol. 13/1979-1981 is a nine-disc (8CD/1DVD) box set.

"His interest in the Bible at the time also seems to reflect a desire to put into place some higher power that might release him from the absurd trappings of modernism and his own unasked-for Exalted Modern Potentate position. Songs like 'I Pity the Poor Immigrant,' 'Dear Landlord,' and 'I am a Lonesome Hobo' don't just talk straight, they don't just roll

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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back the psychedelic chaos of an earlier style, they also stare down a former glamor...'they critique a straying-from-the-source.'

"Everything Dylan did before this album was Amazing with a capital A. But on *John Wesley Harding*, he was like the Wizard of Oz, pulling back the curtain to reveal a different kind of amazing, altogether more miraculous, pathos at the Speed of Life."

"It's hard to imagine all these years later," muses lifelong Bobologist Gary Pig Gold, "the absolute shock it was ending 1967 on 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight.'

"I mean, after such a long blonde wait since *Blonde on Blonde*, not to mention the full-on stereophonic circus with which various Beatles, Doors, Mothers, Monkees and even Stones had assaulted our hearing throughout the ensuing year, *John Wesley Harding* was in so, SO many ways the cooling calm after the sonic storm.

"And not just musically, either! Even the simple, quasi-pastoral setting in sepia that greeted us with that album cover — Who ARE those three other guys with Bob? and Is that REALLY several Beatles hidden in the tree bark ?? — scarcely prepared our overworked eyes and ears for the characteristic curveball Dylan again spun our way. Unless you were so prescient as to have heard Brian and his Boys' equally unpsychedelic *Wild Honey* long-player just a few weeks before, *JWH* took only 38-and-a-half minutes to utterly rearrange one's perceptions, and expectations, for all things rock and roll as the dreaded Year of '68 dawned.

Who are those three other guys with Bob on the *John Wesley Harding* cover ? and are those *really* several Beatles hidden in the tree bark ?

"Everything Dylan did before this album was Amazing with a capital A. But on John Wesley Harding, he was like the Wizard of Oz."

"Then again, I'd just have to agree with Bob that no less than Jimi Hendrix went ahead and soon made 'All Along the Watchtower' absolutely his own."

Bob Johnston, who had produced *Blonde on Blonde* in 1966, met up with Dylan again in 1967 at a Ramada Inn in Nashville, Tennessee before working on *John Wesley Harding* together.

"He played me some songs," recalled Bob in a 2007 interview we did, "and asked, 'what do you think about a bass, drum and guitar?' 'I think it would be fuckin' brilliant if you had a steel guitar.' 'You know anybody?' 'Yeah. Pete Drake.' He was workin' with Chet (Atkins), so I got somebody to take his place and brought him over," Johnston ruminated. "Pete said, 'Can I play some rock 'n' roll?' And I told him, 'That's what you're here for.'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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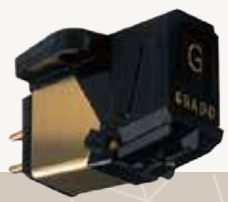

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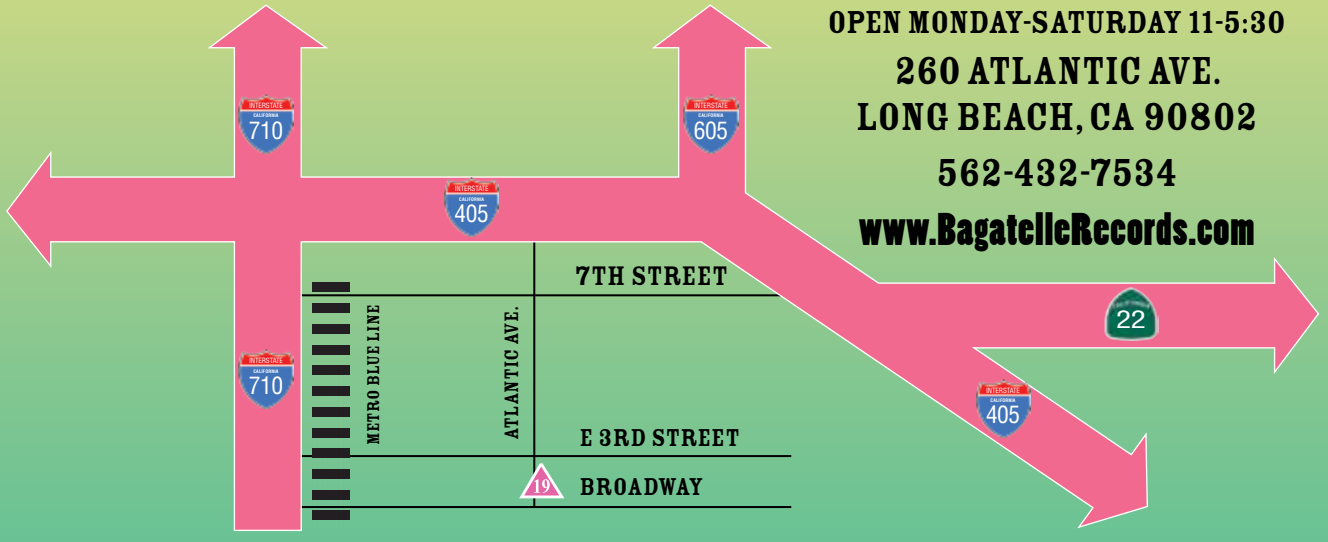

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"Charlie McCoy played a lot of instruments on that album. He played four, five or 20 instruments on every record. And while the rest of the world was doing an album as big as *Blonde on Blonde*, which everybody was — the more musicians they could get, the better it was. (But) we went in with four people... in the middle of a psychedelic world!"

PERHAPS THE LAST WORD ON this half century audio item should come from poet/musician Mick Vranich, who in 2007 sent me an observation entitled *John Wesley Harding* revisited.

"A cold and snowy January day in Detroit at the dawn of 1968 in the Cass corridor heading down Cass avenue to full circle records across from old main on Wayne state u campus. Hey Robin you get Dylan's new album *John Wesley Harding*. O yeah, we got it. (you got to remember the War is Hot on our trail and we are fighting back with a sonic assault Detroit style and the roots run deep) you listen to it yet? Yeah and it ain't blonde on blonde. Another twist in the road flying off his motor bike into the arms of Isaiah. The allegory of escape poems sung with a Nashville grange band the harmonica mixed up front a tribute to bebop. Dylan shrunk from a full-size fold open prince of cool on blonde on blonde to the portrait of the camp cook. Chanting scripture to a military drum beat a romantic two step for the poor immigrant. In the epoch listening to Joe South and

Dylan was like a preacher or evangelist offering between song sermons at times about a potential gloom and doom apocalypse which have been edited out of this *Trouble No More* package.

Stevie Wonder, Jimi Hendrix and Muddy Waters the Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry, Iggy Pop and Marvin Gaye the Beatles Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Tim Hardin — so much left out in the big mix — here comes Bob with a salve for the war wounds a snake oil tale of flight and possible mercy was its own kind of medicine. Dylan was still following the footprints of Woody Guthrie and Little Richard tracks out of the swamp into the desert flanked by harry smith and Harry Houdini for the myth and magic lurking in the shadows of the songs."

Harvey Kubernik is the author of 12 books. His debut literary music anthology Inside Cave Hollywood: The Harvey Kubernik Music InnerViews and InterViews Collection, Vol. 1 was published in November 2017, by Cave Hollywood. Kubernik is also writing and assembling a multi-voice narrative book on the Doors, to be announced December 8th, and scheduled for publication the first part of 2018. Over his 44-year music and pop culture journalism endeavors, Kubernik has been published domestically and internationally in The Hollywood Press, The Los Angeles Free Press, Melody Maker, Crawdaddy!, Variety, The Hollywood Reporter, MOJO, Shindig!, HITS, The Los Angeles Times, Ugly Things, and Record Collector News. During July, 2017, Harvey Kubernik was a guest speaker at The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's Library & Archives Author Series in Cleveland, Ohio discussing his 2017 book 1967 A Complete Rock Music History of the Summer of Love.

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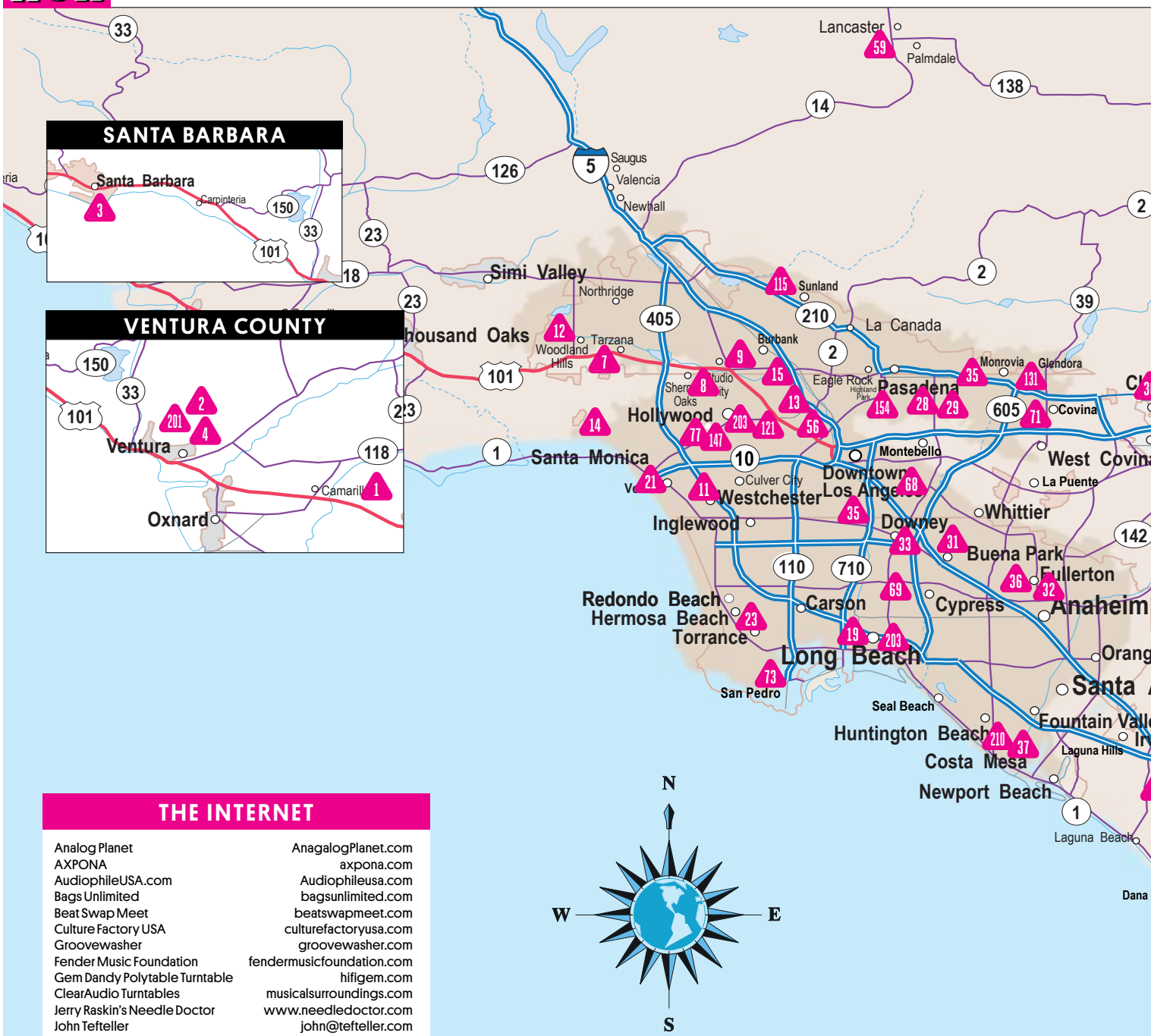

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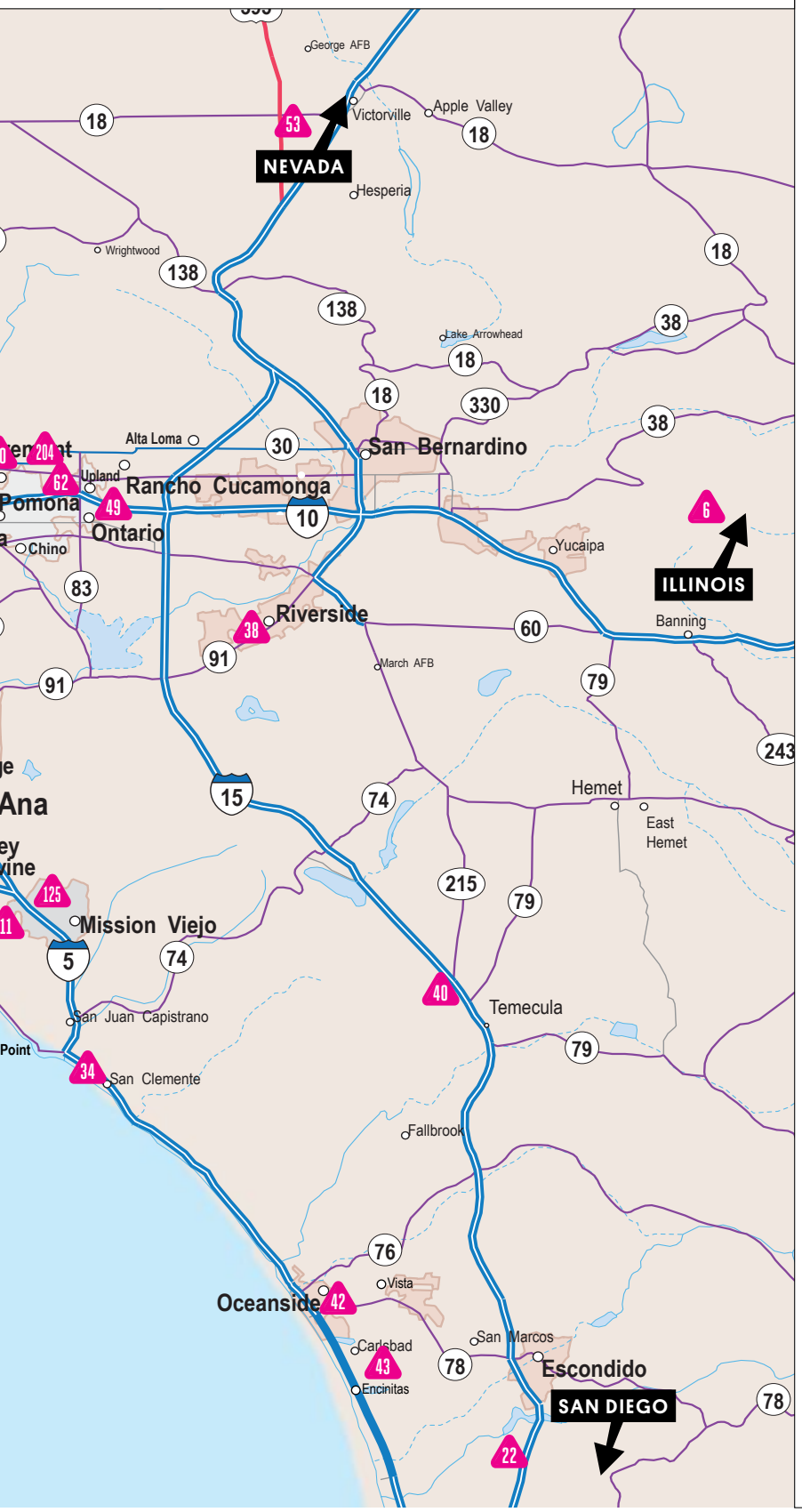

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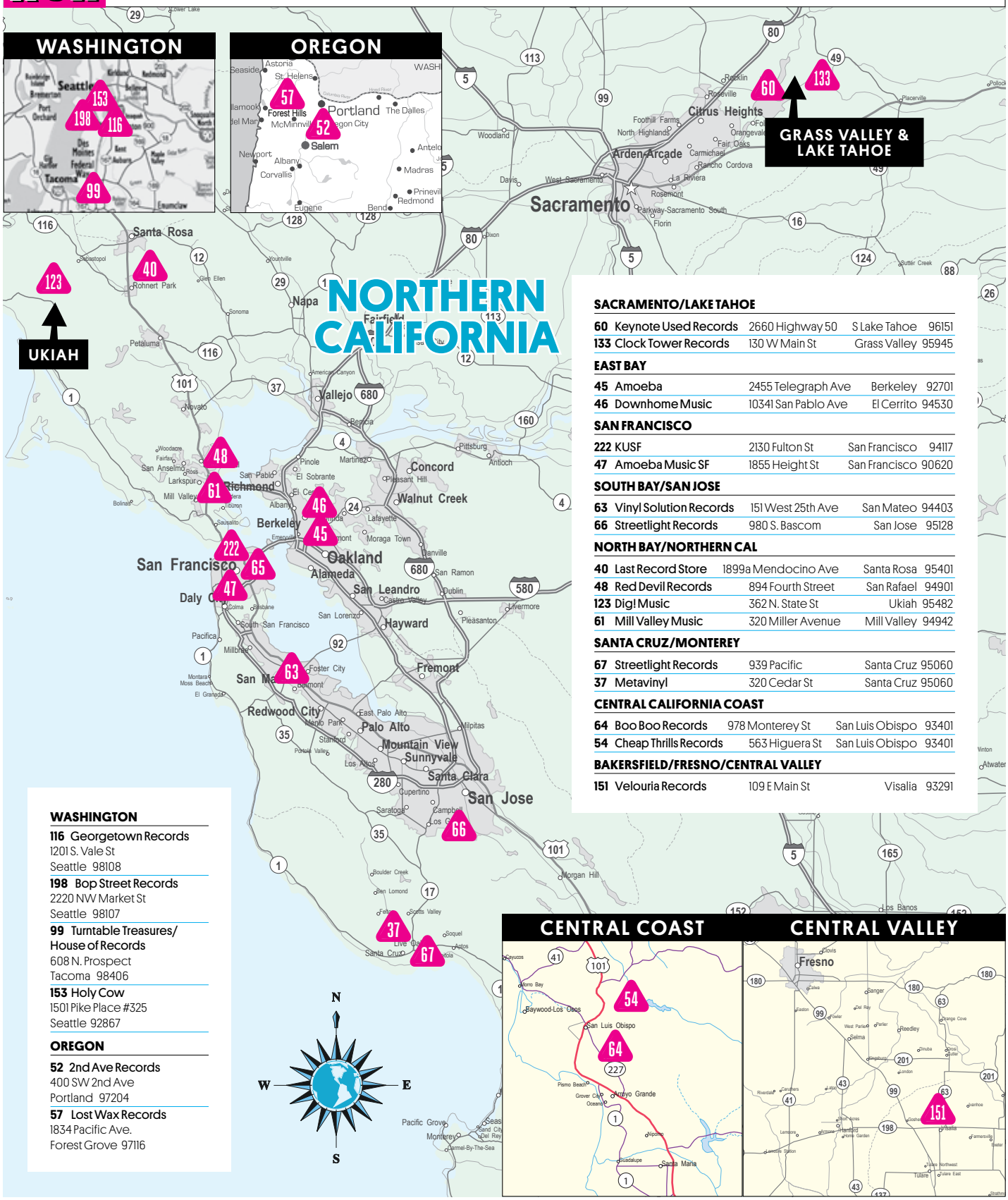

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Making the Grado

Meet John Grado of Grado Labs who is being honored at this year's LA&OC Audio Society Annual Gala with the Founder's Award,

BY DAVID THOMSON

John and Loretta Grado with sons Matthew [L] and Jonathan [R]

DOES BEING BORN INTO THE OLDEST family-run, audio manufacturing business in the world give one the innate drive to continue in its tradition of excellence? Is it in the DNA? Or, is it instilled as you overhear the creative influences that get your musical juices flowing as a 12-year-old while sweeping your uncle's factory floor?

That's how it all started with John Grado who is being honored at this year's LA&OC Audio Society Annual Gala with the Founder's Award, their highest honor.

Anyone interested in audio knows Grado Labs which, arguably, set the industry standard for phono cartridge and headphone ingenuity and value.

With awards galore and 41 patents Joseph Grado, John's uncle and founding family member is responsible for introducing more innovation in phono cartridge design than anyone. He invented the moving coil stereo phono cartridge and, rightfully, was inducted into the Audio Hall of Fame in 1982.

Since the digital age, initially, spun the audio industry into turmoil, especially, when that pesky little sonic spoiler, the CD, was introduced. John's success with headphones was instrumental in Grado's longevity, they kept the company alive.

A little background: In 1953, with two grand and a plan, Joe, a watchmaker at Tiffany by trade and avid music lover, began producing phono cartridges on his kitchen table in Brooklyn.

Later, after series of promotions from floor sweeper, John, with wife Loretta, continued in the kitchen table tradition as they assembled headphones that uncle Joe had designed primarily for the recording industry.

Those first "cans" were engineered more for the performance of studio monitors in their clinical, colorless accuracy and detail.

Not to stereotype yet, being Italian, Uncle Joe was an accomplished opera singer. Under his tutelage, John was taught how to "listen" to the emotional impact of music.

Compound that with the 60s and John was soon disposed to the driving rhythms of the Beatles, Stones, The Who and the like. He experimented in a headphone designed to deliver a more musical sound that would lend itself to the listening tastes of his generation. Without sacrificing fidelity, he strived for a more mainstream headphone that would allow the louder, dynamic, rock and roll to be enjoyed privately. (Maybe, he didn't want us to disturb our neighbors)

Fast forward a few decades when, in 1990, John bought the company from uncle Joe, coincidentally, just as interest in vinyl was on the decline.

Less vinyl production meant plunging turntable sales and the phono cartridge soon followed. Grado's future wasn't quite defined.

Striving for a product to complement the cartridge hasn't all been peaches and dreams. Yet, there was hope.

John realized that with the popularity of portable cassette players, then the Walkman with CD, headphones were an integral part of our audio accessories. With his knowledge, and in keeping with the Grado credo, give value, value, value, it was back to the sounding board.

John debuted the $69, SR60. The headphone's astounding success made him realize that he was right and he'd discovered a product line with a promising future.

He revamped the company direction as the SR60 put Grado back on the audio map, especially, as it was at that price point where music lovers could comfortably wrap their ears around. Winning two *Stereophile* Product of the Year awards: Accessory of the Year and Budget Component of the Year didn't hurt either.

Although the innovation continued with headphone amps, industry accepted refer-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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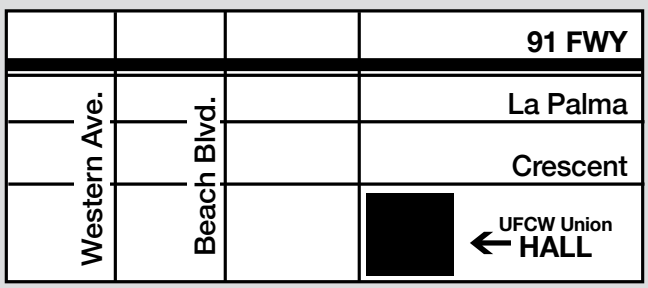

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

ence equipment, etc., so did the Grado credibility as it stood by its customers and continued to manufacture some of the most musical phono cartridges ever– no matter what their budget.

Little did anyone know that the unequaled fidelity of vinyl has driven true music lovers back to the plastic platter so who knows what's next.

The consensus is that it isn't wireless equipment, at least, not yet. Grado has dabbled in that arena and concluded that fidelity-wise, wired gear is still superior. The Grado business model is not driven by fad. The company would never introduce a lesser sounding product under the guise of being current. When wireless technology catches up, they'll be there.

Inevitably, the Grado lineage will introduce it. The Grado DNA is alive and well in sons Jonathon, as Vice President of Marketing, and the younger Matthew as they contribute to the evolution of products for higher fidelity. Both had input on the well-reviewed iGe, GR8, and GR10 earbuds.

The in-ear iGe, or "Iggy," is the perfect "phone" headphone. Designed for those who want that higher fidelity for their music, it's an easy switch take a call.

The higher-FI GR8 and GR10 deliver a more audiophile experience. Their incredible openness, soundstage, and musicality truly amazed me. I was using a competitor's at a similar price point, interestingly, the same company the Madonna was reputedly utilizing. With Neil Young, Aerosmith, Billy Joel, and Spike Jonze openly voicing their preference for Grado, I'm now in good company.

John bought the company from uncle Joe just as interest in vinyl was on the decline.

In the very much in resurgence cartridge realm, the newly introduced EPOCH is garnering similar accolades. Just ask LA&OC Audio Society CEO Bob Levy when you see him at John's award ceremony.

You will also get the opportunity to pick the brain of the very modest, and inspiring, John Grado. Who knows where he and his spirited, truly American, entrepreneurial family will continue to lead audio.

The LA&OC Founder's Award will be presented by both Michael Fremer of *Stereophile* Magazine, and Owen Kwon, President of Astell & Kern, Dec 3rd.

Members, Guests, and visitors most welcome. The LA&OC 24th Annual Society Gala, Holiday Inn Grand Ballroom, 7000 Beach Blvd., Buena Park. 11 AM -3:30 PM. Free parking compliments of the Society. Dress is holiday casual.

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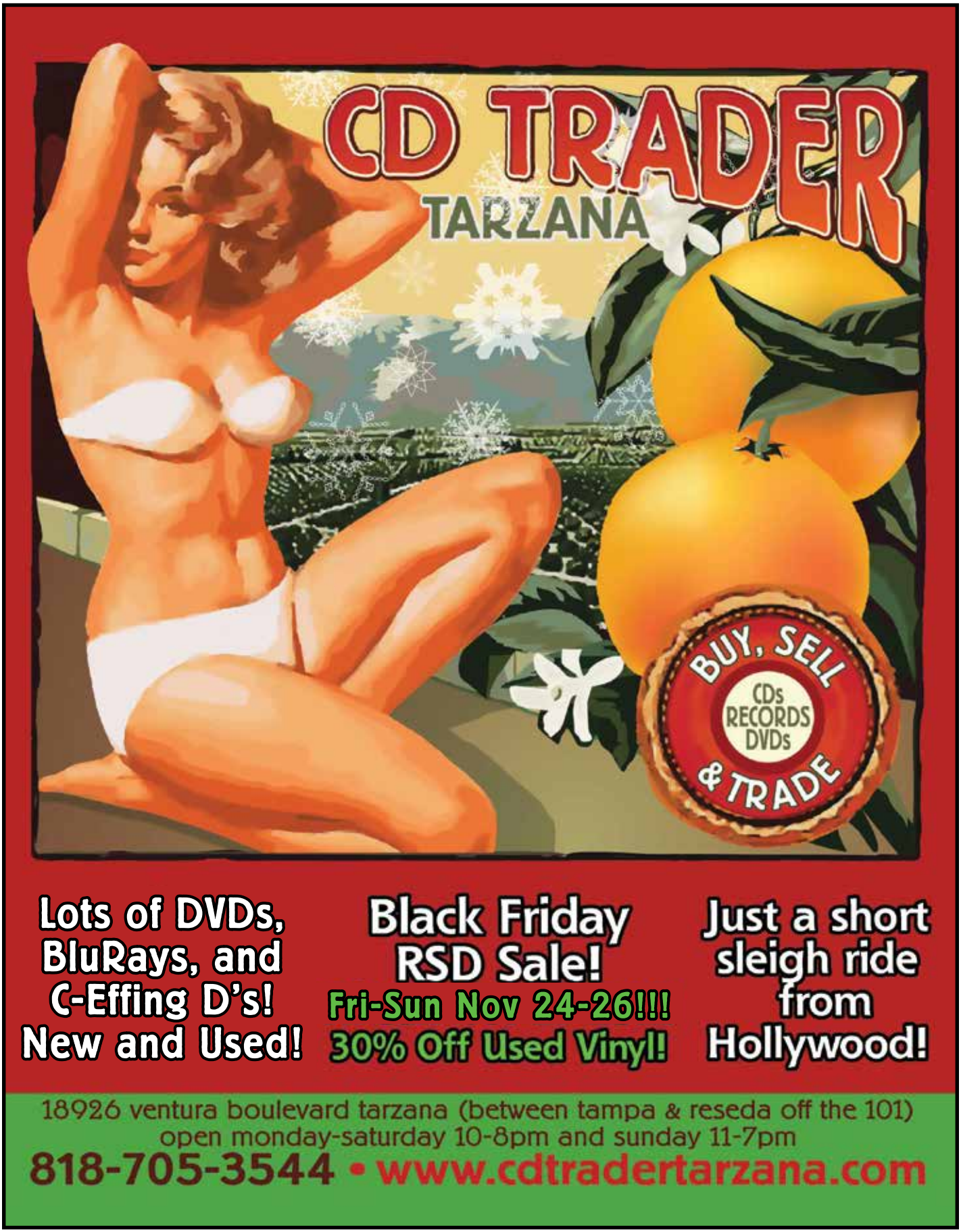
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GEAR

The Cable Guy

Meet Audio Envy's Captain Payne

Captain Payne

BY DAVID THOMSON

MOVE OVER JIM Carrey, there's a new audio cable guy out there who will happily hook you up at a value so affordable that it would be sacrilegious to your music, never mind downright disrespectful to your components, if you didn't check him out... and you can, FREE!

Meet Captain Payne, the creator of Audio Envy, who has many competitors feeling just that — envy of the quality and accuracy of his line of stereo speaker cables, interconnects, and power chords which improve upon similar products costing as much as 20 times more.

Audio cables are the red-headed stepchild of audio. The perception is that wire can't improve the sound that much tho,' that's changing thanks to qualified, experienced audio engineers like Payne who have proven that there is value in test driving a cable upgrade before replacing components. "But beware," Captain warned, "There's a ton of nonsense out there."

"For example, Rhodium is a recent conductor plating fade that is less conductive than gold, costs less money to produce yet, it is billed at a premium with an expectation of greater performance. And, you may have heard that audiophiles can't tell the difference between a coat hanger and Monster speaker wire. "Cynics cling to this urban legend with no scientific merit then believe that it's true."

Well, I'll tell you one thing, the comparison between my two grand, 2" pipes versus Audio Envy's $280, NV-SP5 speaker cables stunned me. Straight out of the packaging–no running in time–the detail across the spec-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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trum from highs to bass floored me. The Beatles' opening information on "Come Together" or, Zappa's "Inca Roads" — tracks I thought I knew backwards — revealed detail and depth that I'd never heard before.

All the while I'd been concentrating on upgrades to my Oracle Turntable or, procuring Joule Electra electronics or a Lyra Titan i cartridge. (I'm still happy with my Manley 300B monoblocks and my Spendor SP9/1s). Meanwhile, I'd been robbing myself by "blindly" believing that my well respected, name brand speaker cables were beyond reproach.

Captain continued, "Cables must come first. Why so many begin their audio system investment with the electronics while accepting inferior cables that reveal little of the plethora of information the components are capable of delivering amazes me."

We postpone their procurement as Captain says, "and forsake an improved experience that is both audible and measurable. Rewiring your speakers can make you think twice about replacing them."

That was my experience; 20 years of thinking that because my speaker cables cost a couple of thousand that they were revealing all of the music. Little did I know that I was sacrificing definition and detail for the seduction of warm, loose sound.

"That romantic sound, as I refer to it," said Captain, "slurs the Transient Response. The faster the transient response the more the recorded information is revealed." In my case, the NV-SP5s also made my system sound much more musical.

"Why so many begin their audio system investment with the electronics while accepting inferior cables that reveal little of the plethora of information the components are capable of delivering amazes me."

More misconceptions and myths include the idea that electricity travels at the speed of light. Electricity travels at the speed of which the medium allows. A typical coax cable is about 60% the speed of light, up to a raw conductor tested in vacuum laboratory conditions at 90%, Velocity of Propagation is the term. Audio Envy's wiring measures in the high 80s!

Anyway, that's enough technogeekspeak. We are *RCN*, not *Scientific American*. Here, we want to keep it simple and impart the information that will reveal the importance of good wiring. You can certainly google for more info.

Plus, just like everything electronic, technological evolution has been incredible since I first bought those well-respected speaker cables, I just didn't know how incredible–until I was exposed to Audio Envy.

Captain continued, "With improvements in transient

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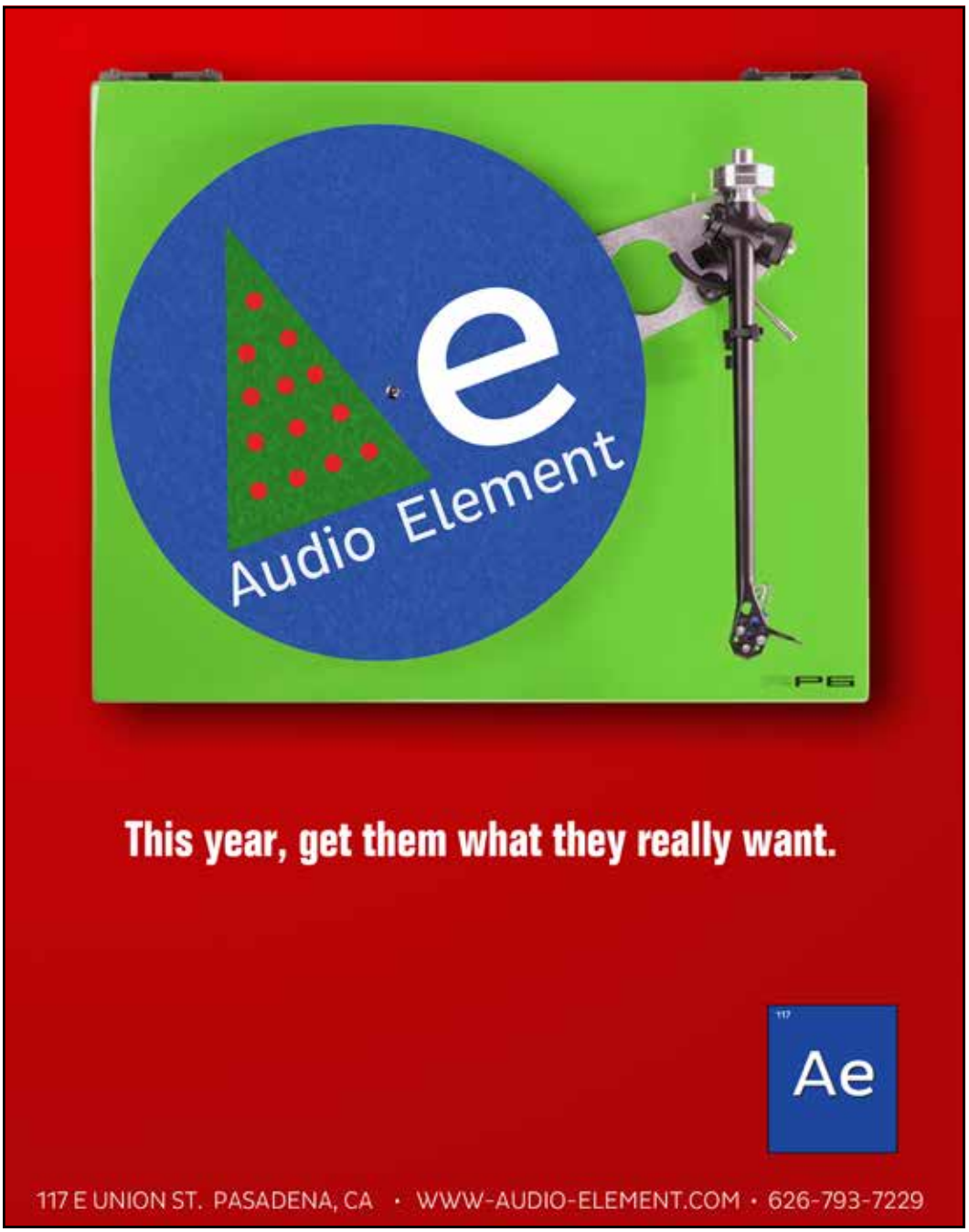

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response, the music gets delivered faster with benefits of a smoother and wider dynamic range. It has taken Audio Envy 10 years of small yet discernible developments that came together to maximize signal potential. The end result in my review system was earth-shattering!" (Does this give a new definition to breaking the sound barrier?)

Quality of materials and meticulous construction are the essence of it all. A 500-foot spool of wire takes 1-2 weeks to construct. Several Audio Envy connectors are hand dipped in 24-carat gold: All this happens in their headquarters in Fort Collins, Colorado.

"Transient response and resolution go hand in hand. The sooner consumers and music makers take advantage of Audio Envy's technology, the sooner cable debates and resolution arguments will be a whisper of the past!"

Also, what it's about really, is minimizing distortion — in all its ugly waveforms. Obviously, the cleaner the signal, the less noise and the more we get to hear. And, as mp3s on mediocre standard issue earbuds are the norm, think of, musically, what we're missing today. It's like when we went from listening to the dynamic range of the LP to accepting the laughable fidelity of cassette tape on a Walkman. Sorry kids, mea culpa. it's now in your DNA.

Yet there's hope. We all hear, and respond to stereo systems, differently. At the recent, inaugural, Los Angeles Audio Show I asked some of the high-end cable manufacturers exhibiting there, "What's the deal with this audio invader securing the first "Alfie," the LASS Best of Show award? How can cables costing a few hundred bucks compare sonically to a much heftier — not only in girth but wallet damage — and more recognizable, respected brands?

Quality of materials and meticulous construction are the essence of it all. A 500-foot spool of wire takes 1-2 weeks to construct.

"Perceived value," was the consensus. "When you spend a hundred thousand dollars on your audio system, do you really fuss over 10% of your budget being spent on cables? In fact, many want to boast that their interconnects cost bla-bla-bla." (Fess-up time: I used to joke with friends that, "...my cables cost more than your car!")

As was mentioned in last issue's LASS editorial coverage, kudos to the Natural Sound salon for giving the opportunity Captain to walk the talk and allow him to swap out the recognized power chords for his Audio Envy Ocean Elite. Then, after noticing palpable sonic improvement, replacing the speaker cables costing almost 20 times more than the Audio Envy NV-SP5 pair–which are still coupled with them today.

"I'm not selling a theory," Captain concluded, "I'm selling results."

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Chet Baker in Germany, 1979

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, MICHIEL HENDRYCKX

Chet Baker, 1983

BY ARMAND LEWIS

THERE HAVE BEEN FEW lives as tortured, yet so prolific as Chet Baker's. The lyrical trumpeter with the choirboy voice would record literally hundreds of albums while spending much of his life dealing with the horrors of addiction and other personal problems of his own making. Born in Oklahoma in 1929, this naturally intuitive musician would be (at various times) a teen idol, a jazz giant, an exiled criminal and, through it all, a total romantic.

For most of his life, he would be an enigma. Constantly in motion, due to both his personal troubles and plentiful employment opportunities, he would spend much of his adult life all over Europe, returning to America only when absolutely necessary.

Baker first came into prominence when baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan picked the trumpeter to accompany him in a quartet that revolutionized small group jazz. The group was one of the first units to omit the piano from its rhythm section. Along with the delicate interplay between Mulligan and Baker, this gave the music a lightness and gentle swing that was unheard of at the time. Baker's soft trumpet style was even more amazing when one realizes that he was almost entirely self-taught. His natural talent was such that he rarely would even practice.

When the Mulligan group broke up in 1953, Baker started recording under his own name. His smooth trumpet style, his quiet, but emotional singing and movie star looks, made him *the*

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SUNDAY DECEMBER 5

Pasadena, CA. Pasadena City College Flea Market and Record Swap. 1570 E Colorado Blvd. Pasadena. 8am-3pm. FREE admission. Parking $2

SUNDAY DECEMBER 10

Newark, CA. Newark Record Swap Meet. Newark Pavilion 6430 Thornton Ave. $3.50 7am-1pm. 408-263-5127

Los Angeles, CA. LA Record Fair. 5610 Soto St Huntington Park FREE 3pm-8pm 213-926-8220

SATURDAY DECEMBER 16

Long Beach, CA. 45 Revolutions Record Swap Meet. Alex's Bar 2913 E Anaheim St. Free 21+, 1pm-7pm. I guess you should search them out on the face book deal for more info.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 17

Longmont, CO. Bounder County Record Show. Boulder County Fairgrounds, Barn A. $3. 303-774-8868

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

teen music idol before the arrival of Elvis a few years later.

But by this point, Baker was already running afoul of the law. In 1955, on an ill-fated tour of Europe, Baker had begun retreating from the pressures of stardom into the heroin addiction that would plague him for the rest of his life.

In subsequent years, Chet Baker would return to the U.S., get into legal trouble, retreat to Italy, get into trouble there, move on to Germany, Sweden, France, back to the U.S. and back again to Europe in an endless cycle of new beginnings and inevitable disappointments. Along the way, he would still record classic LP like *Chet Baker and Crew* (Pacific Jazz - 1956), *Chet* (Riverside – 1958), and a series of LPs for Prestige in 1967 which would prove he was not just a "pretty boy," but the equal of any of the hardest swinging jazz players.

By the 1970s, Baker was almost permanently based in Europe, though he never "settled" anywhere. Recording opportunities were plentiful and he would record for basically anyone who would pay his fee up front. Often the results were sometimes rather weak or even unreleasable, but occasionally when everything was right, Baker could still lay down a magnificent recording.

On the night of April 2nd, 1979, everything was very right when Baker and his rhythm section, consisting of pianist Phil Markowitz, bassist Jean Louis Rassinfosse and drummer Charlie Rice, were recorded in concert for NDR Hamburg radio.

As part of what looks to be an ongoing series of recordings from NDR's archive, *Chet Baker At Onkel Po's Carnegie Hall Hamburg 1979* (Jazzline N-78038) presents literally 100 minutes of Baker playing at his best in the venerable club.

The album is made up of just five tunes — all from Baker's standard repertoire of the period — each played in extended performances. "Love for Sale," "You Can't Go Home Again," "Black Eyes" and "Broken Wing" all have superb instrumental renditions while, "There's Never Be Another You" features a vocal chorus by Baker, who's voice that evening is admittedly not as pure and sharp as his trumpet.

And Baker's trumpet is very sharp. Combining his always strong melodic sense with bop phrasing, this album emerges as one of Baker's strongest pure jazz albums to be released in a long time. That his rhythm section contributes masterful solos as well as an almost funky rhythmic backing makes this an album to return to again and again.

While there would be many other concerts and recordings between 1979 and Baker's death just nine years later, this concert will likely stand as a high point. The inconsistency of Baker's later career shows not only the problems he inflicted on himself but also his determination to continue performing in the face of adversity. In spite of everything, he managed to continue playing with an innocence and delicacy that would be hard for anyone to keep up after 30 years of self-inflicted abuse.

Toward the end, Baker was sometimes not up to the task, but even then, there were still nights that he could produce pure magic. *Chet Baker at Onkel PO's Carnegie Hall Hamburg 1979* is one of the best examples of this later-year magic to surface since his passing.

Armand Lewis buys and sells rare Jazz LPs. He can be reached at mrbluenote@peoplepc.com

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